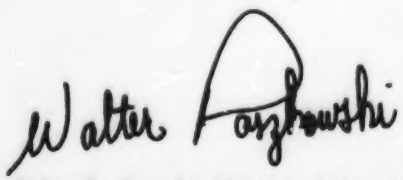
Municipal Affairs

ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

This Business Plan for the three years commencing April 1, 2000 was prepared under my direction in accordance with the *Government Accountability Act* and the government's accounting policies. All of the government's policy decisions as at February 1, 2000 with material economic or fiscal implications of which I am aware have been considered in preparing the Business Plan.

The Ministry's priorities outlined in the Business Plan were developed in the context of the government's business and fiscal plans. I am committed to achieving the planned results laid out in this Business Plan.



Walter Paszkowski, *Minister of Municipal Affairs*
February 1, 2000

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INTRODUCTION

Alberta benefits from being the province of choice for thousands of Canadians looking to make a fresh start. Last year alone net interprovincial migration added 31,064 more people to Alberta's population. While this growth brings tremendous economic opportunity for Alberta and Alberta's businesses, it also increases demand for local services and municipal infrastructure. Every person lives in a municipality; Albertans' lives are touched by the services and decisions made by their local governments.

In the midst of the province's continued growth, Alberta Municipal Affairs will help to ensure Albertans live in safe and sustainable communities, are served by open, effective and accountable local governments, and have their privacy protected. It will do so through its four key business areas: Local Government Services, Safety Services, Disaster Services, and Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy. This will support the Alberta Advantage; maintaining Alberta as the province of choice as the new millennium is ushered in.

BUSINESS PLAN SETTING

A number of current issues and evolving challenges confront the Ministry and will shape the new three-year business plan:

- continued pressures on local services, facilities, and infrastructure caused by growth of the Alberta economy, changing demographics and environmental factors that affect local communities;
- the need to improve the standardization of the property assessment system to ensure efficiency, uniformity, and equity;
- the need to clarify and potentially redefine provincial-municipal relationships to improve service quality, efficiency, and accountability;
- the need to cooperatively address the challenges facing small municipalities;
- increasing financial pressures on municipalities;
- continued need to support and advise all public bodies, such as local government bodies and post-secondary institutions, to help them comply with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*; and
- the requirement for enhanced information systems to improve service efficiency, measurement, and quality.

VISION

Improved services through sustainable, cooperative local government.

MISSION

Alberta Municipal Affairs works in partnership with Alberta's municipalities, other government departments, local authorities, various local organizations, and the private sector to ensure Albertans live in safe and sustainable communities, are served by open, effective and accountable governments, and have their privacy protected.

The Ministry supports the government's three core businesses in these ways:

- by helping **People** to be safe and self-reliant, through the Ministry's safety and emergency preparedness services;
- by promoting Alberta's **Prosperity** and the Alberta Advantage by encouraging the development of an efficient local government sector that provides the services, facilities, and infrastructure that Albertans and businesses need;
- by **Preserving** Alberta's traditions that support the existence of sustainable and safe communities that are responsive to their citizens.

CORE BUSINESSES

The Ministry's core business activities support the vision and mission of the Ministry. They include:

- providing support services, policies and legislation that enhance the development of a sustainable, accountable, responsive and effective local government sector;
- promoting and applying appropriate safety standards throughout the province;
- managing provincial disaster planning and recovery programs and support to municipalities to ensure their preparedness to deal with emergencies and after disasters to assist in recovery; and
- providing a legislative and policy framework and support to public bodies to enhance access to information and protection of privacy for Albertans.

MAJOR CLIENTS AND STAKEHOLDERS

The Ministry's primary clients include municipalities and their related organizations and associations, accredited safety agencies, public bodies under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, and industry-based safety and emergency planning groups. The Ministry consults and works with the local government sector, with the public and industry, and with other provincial and federal departments as an integral and ongoing part of its activities.

MAJOR GOALS

The Ministry's major goals include:

- an effective, responsive, cooperative and well-managed local government sector;
- financially sustainable and accountable municipalities; and
- the effective delivery of programs and services to support local governance, protection of privacy, public safety and emergency preparedness.

BUSINESS PLAN GOALS, KEY RESULTS, AND STRATEGIES

These goals integrate and link the various program and service areas within the Ministry.

GOAL 1: AN EFFECTIVE, RESPONSIVE, COOPERATIVE AND WELL-MANAGED LOCAL GOVERNMENT SECTOR

KEY RESULTS	KEY STRATEGIES
• Support systems and programs that support excellence in local governance, management, and service delivery.	• Encourage municipalities to cooperate with their neighbours to develop and implement improved and more efficient service delivery systems. • Develop and coordinate education and information services that include training programs, job exchanges, on-line information, and workshops for local elected officials, administrators, staff, and related professionals. • Develop and implement a program for encouraging the self-evaluation of excellence. Develop improved measures of performance that may be used by councils in reporting to their citizens. • Encourage municipalities, businesses, and other partners to participate in the administration of the safety system. Ensure the roles and responsibilities of all partners are clearly understood and support the safety needs of Albertans. Provide support and advisory services to improve the administration and application of safety codes and standards. • Ensure that municipalities and businesses are adequately prepared for emergencies by working with them to develop and test their emergency plans and assisting them to enhance their preparedness to deal with actual occurrences. • Assist local public bodies to assume their Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) responsibilities through the provision of an ongoing policy framework and supporting advisory services.
• Resolve local and inter-municipal governance and management issues through responsive and effective Ministry support.	• Provide governance, administration and management, and land-use planning advice to local governments and associated local service delivery organizations. • Support inter-municipal cooperation and self-directed dispute resolution through mediation and facilitation. • Provide assistance to municipalities and citizens engaged in developing innovative strategies for more effective governance.
• A legislative framework that enables municipalities to operate successfully and meet the local needs of Albertans.	• Recommend changes to provincial legislation and regulations that support innovative and improved approaches to local governance and service delivery. The Minister will consult with stakeholders regarding the possible separation of the *Municipal Government Act* into two or more Acts. Also under consideration will be the removal of administrative processes and procedures from the *Municipal Government Act* and placing them in regulations. • Work cooperatively with other ministries, municipalities, and other organizations to improve the provision, coordination and delivery of programs, policies and services that enhance local service effectiveness and efficiency.

GOAL 2: FINANCIALLY SUSTAINABLE AND ACCOUNTABLE MUNICIPALITIES

KEY RESULTS	KEY STRATEGIES
• Appropriate Ministry services and systems in place to support financially sustainable municipalities.	• Maintain the Ministry's financial monitoring systems that provide evidence of municipal financial capacity and provide continued advisory support to municipalities. • Assist municipalities to examine and pursue innovative approaches and restructuring that will enhance their financial strength.
• Financial support that enhances local government financial capability.	• Administer the Unconditional Municipal Grant Program to provide ongoing financial assistance in support of municipal programs. The Ministry will examine new formulae and options to enhance the effectiveness of the program. • Administer the Municipal 2000 Sponsorship Program, which targets limited-term assistance to specific municipal needs including promoting inter-municipal cooperation and innovative projects. • Administer the Grants-in-Place-of-Taxes program to provide grants to municipalities for properties owned by the province. • Administer the Municipal Debenture Interest Rebate Program to subsidize the interest costs on certain borrowings from the Alberta Municipal Financing Corporation. • Provide disaster financial assistance to complement local government resources, share costs at a provincial level and facilitate federal cost sharing whenever possible.

GOAL 3: THE EFFECTIVE DELIVERY OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES TO SUPPORT LOCAL GOVERNANCE, PROTECTION OF PRIVACY, PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

KEY RESULTS	KEY STRATEGIES
• An equitable and efficient property assessment system in Alberta.	• Enhance, develop and maintain assessment standards and procedures through timely advice, consistent assessments and audits, the establishment of handbooks and professional guides and by ensuring that practices and methodologies are current. • Develop options and implement recommendations for improving the efficiency and timeliness of the assessment appeal process. • Improve the equalization process and the linear assessment process through the use of more reliable sources of data and by implementing recommendations of the linear process review project. • Review the valuation of provincially owned properties to ensure the appropriateness of Grants-in-Place-of-Taxes. • Participate in MLA committees and implement government approved recommendations to improve the effectiveness and suitability of programs.

(Continued...)

GOAL 3: THE EFFECTIVE DELIVERY OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES TO SUPPORT LOCAL GOVERNANCE, PROTECTION OF PRIVACY, PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS *(CONTINUED)*

KEY RESULTS	KEY STRATEGIES
• A coordinated provincial government approach towards municipalities.	• Enhance collaboration with provincial departments/agencies, and clarify the government's delivery framework with municipalities.
• A safety services system throughout the province that is effective and accountable and commands high public confidence.	• Develop improved measurement and accountability programs using a risk management approach to ensure that consistent safety standards are applied uniformly throughout the province. • Increase public awareness and understanding of the purpose of codes and standards adopted under the *Safety Codes Act*. • Participate in the ongoing development, maintenance and adoption of appropriate provincial, national, and international codes and standards, in consultation with the Safety Codes Council, the public, industry, and other jurisdictions.
• Timely and effective response to disasters and emergencies.	• Increase the Ministry's capacity to coordinate emergency/disaster training for the province, its municipalities, and industry. • Ensure that the province is prepared for emergencies by regularly reviewing, testing, and modifying the province's emergency plans and working with all departments to assure a coordinated response to major emergencies and disasters. • Continue consulting with the federal government to ensure that federal-provincial disaster assistance arrangements are consistently applied and equitable. • Continue to improve internal systems and capabilities to quickly respond with disaster financial assistance when required.
• Albertans will have fair and effective access to information and protection of privacy.	• Respond to the recommendations of the Select Special Freedom of Information and Privacy Act Review Committee. • Provide training, publications, and other support services to government departments and staff and to other public bodies and the private sector to promote the effective application and a greater understanding of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. • Consult and coordinate with other government departments and local public bodies in matters related to the legislation, and participate in agreed federal-provincial initiatives related to proposed federal privacy legislation for the private sector.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Staff from five specialized areas including Finance and Administration, Human Resource Services, Communications, Business Planning and Corporate Support, and Legal Services, provide support to the operating divisions in achieving their business plan goals and strategies. These areas support the business plan through key initiatives and strategies that affect the entire Ministry.

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

One of the priorities over the course of this three-year business plan is to maximize the flexibility of the Ministry's human resources by ensuring the knowledge, skills and abilities are in place to accomplish current and future business plan goals. Continuous learning and staff development are encouraged. This is even more important today to meet the ongoing challenges of a growing economy that has placed demands on staff.

A Corporate Human Resource Strategy is being implemented across government in response to the Growth Summit recommendations. It addresses issues such as the overall aging of the public service, stiff competition for scarce resources and rapidly changing skill needs. As part of our Human Resource Plan, the Ministry has undertaken initiatives to achieve the strategic intent of this government-wide strategy. This includes initiatives in the areas of corporate learning, leadership development, recruitment and continuity planning.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Municipal Affairs' Information Technology priorities are designed to ensure that technology supports the business, that communication and information management are as technologically efficient as possible, that departmental operating systems and technology infrastructure support business requirements, and remain stable and secure, and that staff are fully trained to make maximum use of the computer tools available to them.

LEGAL SERVICES STRATEGIES

Legal Services supports the business plan through client-oriented services and innovative solutions.

GOALS	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	SOURCE	HISTORICAL/CURRENT BASELINE	TARGET
Goal 1: An effective, responsive, cooperative and well managed local government sector.	Level of satisfaction with the Ministry's activities, services, programs, and legislative framework in enabling and promoting a cooperative and well managed local government sector. This measurement is centered on the Local Government Services Division and Safety Services.	Annual survey satisfaction	Baseline will be determined in the fourth quarter of 1999/2000	To be determined
Goal 2: Financially sustainable and accountable municipalities.	Percentage of municipalities meeting Ministry's criteria of financial sustainability. The key criteria are based upon legislation contained within the *Municipal Government Act*. The measure will be calculated based upon a point system weighting the criteria. Municipalities exceeding a set point limit will be considered not to have met the criteria for municipal sustainability.	Ministry's municipal financial monitoring system	Historical data is currently being reviewed	90% sustainable municipalities
Goal 3: The effective delivery of programs and services to support local governance, protection of privacy, public safety and emergency preparedness.	**Property Assessments** Percentage of municipal assessment rolls which meet provincial standards for procedures, uniformity, and equity.	Ministry audit/ review procedures	1996/97 - 66% 1997/98 - 88% 1998/99 - 93%	95%
	Safety Services The percentage of accredited municipalities and agencies, and delegated administrative organizations administering the *Safety Codes Act* that achieve a satisfactory rating.	Ministry monitoring system	85% achieved satisfactory rating in 1997	in 2000/01 - 90% in 2001/02 - 90% in 2002/03 - 95%
	Disaster and Emergency Preparedness 1. Achieve a level of 100% of claims where a member of the damage assessment team arrives on-site within 30 days of a claim being received.	Ministry processing data	1996/97 - 99.7% 1997/98 - 100.0% 1998/99 - N/A	100%
	2. Level of preparedness testing as measured by the percentage of municipalities, required to have emergency plans under the *Disaster Services Act*, that test their emergency plans through exercises within a four-year cycle.	Ministry operational data	1998/99 - (40% completed)	2000/01 - 85% completed 2001/02 - 100% completed
	Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) 1. Timeliness of compliance to the access provisions of FOIP, as measured by the percentage of FOIP requests completed by government public bodies within Legislative guidelines.	Government public body request tracking data	1996/97 - 92% 1997/98 - 90% 1998/99 - 91% Based on a 60-day period	95%
	2. Satisfaction with the FOIP program as measured by the percentage of FOIP requests completed by government public bodies that are handled without complaint to the office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner.	Government public body request tracking data and data from the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner	1996/97 - 88% 1997/98 - 92% 1998/99 - 94%	95%

Ministry Income Statement

(thousands of dollars)

	Comparable 1998-99 Actual	Comparable 1999-2000 Budget	Comparable 1999-2000 Forecast	2000-01 Estimates	2001-02 Target	2002-03 Target
REVENUE						
Internal Government Transfers	10,000	10,000	10,000	12,000	12,000	12,000
Transfers from Government of Canada	897	769	6,979	420	420	420
Investment Income	57	-	-	-	-	-
Premiums, Fees and Licences	793	469	681	459	459	459
Other Revenue	1,748	1,305	1,403	1,307	1,307	1,307
MINISTRY REVENUE	13,495	12,543	19,063	14,186	14,186	14,186
EXPENSE						
Program						
Ministry Support Services	7,417	7,714	8,797	8,086	8,231	8,293
Municipal Programs	117,304	113,501	109,712	112,629	113,995	114,417
Public Safety and Information Management	9,867	8,831	18,708	19,373	9,519	9,678
Municipal Government Board	2,065	1,805	2,157	1,847	1,919	1,941
Valuation Adjustments and Other Provisions	268	-	-	-	-	-
MINISTRY EXPENSE	136,921	131,851	139,374	141,935	133,664	134,329
Gain (Loss) on Disposal of Capital Assets	(940)	-	-	-	-	-
NET OPERATING RESULT	(124,366)	(119,308)	(120,311)	(127,749)	(119,478)	(120,143)

Consolidated Net Operating Result

(thousands of dollars)

	Comparable 1998-99 Actual	Comparable 1999-2000 Budget	Comparable 1999-2000 Forecast	2000-01 Estimates	2001-02 Target	2002-03 Target
Ministry Revenue	13,495	12,543	19,063	14,186	14,186	14,186
Inter-ministry consolidation adjustments	(10,000)	(10,000)	(10,000)	(12,000)	(12,000)	(12,000)
Consolidated Revenue	3,495	2,543	9,063	2,186	2,186	2,186
Ministry Program Expense	136,921	131,851	139,374	141,935	133,664	134,329
Inter-ministry consolidation adjustments	-	-	-	-	-	-
Consolidated Program Expense	**136,921**	**131,851**	**139,374**	**141,935**	**133,664**	**134,329**
Gain (Loss) on Disposal of Capital Assets	(940)	-	-	-	-	-
CONSOLIDATED NET OPERATING RESULT	(134,366)	(129,308)	(130,311)	(139,749)	(131,478)	(132,143)